

payment for the return trip would be limited to that allowed for traveling to the new residence from the nearest facility to the new residence in Detroit where the care or services could have been provided).

(5) If the beneficiary is in a terminal condition at a VA facility or other facility under VA auspices and travels to a non-VA medical facility for the purpose of being nearer to his or her residence, payment may be made for travel to the medical facility receiving the beneficiary for such purpose.

(6) Payment may be made for travel from a non-VA health care facility where the beneficiary is receiving care or services to the nearest VA facility where the appropriate care or services could be provided.

(7) Payment will not be made for return travel for a beneficiary receiving an irregular discharge.

(8) On a case-by-case basis, payment for travel may be paid for any distance if it is financially favorable to the government (for example, payment for travel could be allowed to a more distant nursing home when admission to that nursing home is a prerequisite to qualify for community assistance that would more than offset the additional travel payment).

(c) Payment for travel of an attendant under this section will be calculated on the same basis as for the beneficiary.

(d) For shared travel in a privately-owned vehicle, payments are limited to the amount for one beneficiary (for example, if a beneficiary and an attendant travel in the same automobile or if two beneficiaries travel in the same automobile, the amount for mileage will be limited to the amount for one beneficiary).

(e) Beneficiary travel will not be paid under the following circumstances:

(1) The payment of the travel allowance would be counterproductive to the therapy being provided and such determination is recorded in the patient's medical records, and

(2) The chief of the service or a designee reviewed and approved the determination by signature in the patient's medical record.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

#### § 70.31 Deductibles.

(a) VA shall deduct an amount established by the Secretary for each one-way trip from the amount otherwise payable under this part for such one-way trip, except that:

(1) VA shall not deduct any amounts in a calendar month after the completion of six one-way trips for which deductions were made in such calendar month, and

(2) Whenever the Secretary adjusts the mileage rates as a result of the investigation described in § 70.30(a)(1)(iv), the Secretary shall, effective on the date such mileage rate change should occur, adjust proportionally the deductible amount in effect at the time of the adjustment. If a determination is made that a change is warranted, the new deductible(s) will be published in the notice section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. Current deductible(s) can be found at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/Library/pubs/BeneficiaryTravel/BeneficiaryTravel.pdf> or by contacting the Beneficiary Travel office at the closest VA health care facility.

(b) The provisions under this section for making deductions shall not apply to:

(1) Travel that includes travel by a special mode of transportation,

(2) Travel to a VA facility for a scheduled compensation and pension examination, and

(3) Travel by a non-veteran.

(c) VA shall waive the deductible under this section when it would cause the beneficiary severe financial hardship. For purposes of this section, severe financial hardship occurs if the beneficiary:

(1) Is in receipt of a VA pension;

(2) Has income for the year prior to the year in which application is made pursuant to § 70.20 that does not exceed the household income threshold determined under 38 U.S.C. 1722(a) (the current income thresholds can be found at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/Library/pubs/VAIncomeThresholds/VAIncomeThresholds.pdf>); or

(3) Has circumstances in the year the application is made pursuant to § 70.20 that cause his or her projected income not to exceed the household income

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threshold determined under 38 U.S.C. 1722(a).

(d) Waivers granted under this section are valid:

(1) Through the end of the calendar year of the application made pursuant to § 70.20; or

(2) Until there is a change in the beneficiary's household income during the calendar year of the application made pursuant to § 70.20 that results in the beneficiary no longer meeting the terms of paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) A beneficiary granted a waiver under this section must promptly inform VA of any household income status change during the waiver period that results in the beneficiary no longer meeting the terms of paragraph (c) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection provisions in this section under control number 2900-0091)

## **§ 70.32 Reimbursement or prior payment.**

(a) Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis after the travel has occurred, except that:

(1) Upon completion of examination, treatment, or care, payment may be made before the return travel has occurred, and

(2) In the case of travel by a person to or from a VA facility by special mode of transportation, VA may provide payment for beneficiary travel to the provider of the transportation before determining eligibility of such person for such payment if VA determines that the travel is for emergency treatment and the beneficiary or other person made a claim that the beneficiary is eligible for payment for the travel.

(b) Payment under this part will be made to the beneficiary, except that VA may make a beneficiary travel payment under this part to a person or organization other than the beneficiary upon satisfactory evidence that the person or organization actually provided or paid for the travel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

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### **§ 70.40 Administrative procedures.**

Upon denial of an initial claim for beneficiary travel, VA will provide the claimant written notice of the decision and advise the claimant of reconsideration and appeal rights. A claimant who disagrees with the initial decision denying the claim for beneficiary travel, in whole or in part, may obtain reconsideration under § 17.133 of this chapter and may file an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals under parts 19 and 20 of this chapter. An appeal may be made directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals without requesting reconsideration.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

### **§ 70.41 Recovery of payments.**

Payments for beneficiary travel made to persons ineligible for such payment are subject to recapture under applicable law, including the provisions of §§ 1.900 through 1.953 of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

### **§ 70.42 False statements.**

A person who makes a false statement for the purpose of obtaining payments for beneficiary travel may be prosecuted under applicable laws, including 18 U.S.C. 1001.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)

### **§ 70.50 Reduced fare requests.**

Printed reduced-fare requests for use by eligible beneficiaries and their attendants when traveling at their own expense to or from any VA facility or VA-authorized facility for authorized VA health care are available from any VA medical facility. Beneficiaries may use these request forms to ask transportation providers, such as bus companies, for a reduced fare. Whether to grant a reduced fare is determined by the transportation provider.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 111, 501, 1701, 1714, 1720, 1728, 1782, 1783, E.O. 11302)